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A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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No. 162

A TRIBUTE TO GILBERT PATTEN

From an English Admirer
Herbert Leckenby

I read those fine striking tributes to Gilbert Patten in the March 1945 Roundup with great interest and a pang of regret. Regret, because they meant his magic pen was still forever. Long years ago I revelled in his Merriwell stories as much as any American boy.

I first became acquainted with Tip Top when Dick Merriwell at Fardale appeared as a kind of serial running for about 13 weeks under the same title. That was somewhere in the 200s. The papers only came over at infrequent intervals, but I used to scan the book stores until I was able to get together quite a decent collection. I was able, also to find some of the earlier numbers, but of the smaller page size.

I bought the Nick Carters, Buffalo Bills, Diamond Dicks, Brave & Bold and others too, but to me, the Tip Top was the best of them all. In many ways Tip Top was similar to these famous English papers of ours, The Gem and The Magnet.

There was the same good moral tone, the same skill in appealing to boys better interests without appearing to preach, and all the same time making the stories full of clean humor and excitement, in each case, too, one author was identified with the stories from beginning to end.

People may sneer at the sort of stories followed by boys, but say what we will, when a man could go on

writing about the same characters for sixteen years, as Burt L. Standish did and envy to the publishers thousands of testimonies of the great influence the stories have had upon their youthful readers, then, I say, Gilbert Patten can sleep in his grave as peacefully as any man.

For almost 30 years, I never saw a Tip Top, then, thanks to Ralph Cummings, I was able to renew acquaintance. What a thrill I got, when, one morning a parcel arrived, and on opening, I saw before me the once familiar covers. I was able to look back the years to the days when I was a boy. There was, however a melancholy coincidence attached to the opening of that parcel. Having looked through them, I put them on one side to return to a little later. I then picked up my morning paper. It was January 17, and the very first thing that caught my eye was a small paragraph, announcing the death of Gilbert Patten, the day before, so that mixed with the pleasure I felt at receiving these papers, was a feeling of wistful regret.

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Have just heard the very sad news, that Sam Conner of Auburn, Maine, had died, a short time after having a very bad shock. Another good old timer gone. He was planning on visiting your editor this summer. God bless him always, and we send sympathy to his dear wife and family.

Don Brewer says he remembers about in 1906 when he went to the

Grand Opera Co., theatre, to see the "Old Homestead," and a post that held the gallery up slipped off the block, and went down in the cellar and the gallery dropped about 3 feet. He says, what fun. You should have seen the scramble, lots of derbies got smashed.

Who has Pluck & Luck #100 with or without covers. Ye editors own copy, has some 8 or 10 pages inside with corners torn off, taking lots of the reading matter too. Ye editor also wants Nos. 184, 190, 192, 193, 194, 197, 200. He needs these to be able to get photos of a nice long run of 1 to 200.

Ralph F. Adimari writes that Miss Hazel Shea, 218 Fisher Ave., Tottenville, S. I., New York, is the daughter of Cornelius Shea who wrote all the Young Wild West Weeklies. She has the entire run of them, or did have. Harry A. Well says Shea conducted a Tobacco Shop on Staten Island, besides writing Westerns.

Fred Orphall wrote quite some time ago, when we thought we might change the name of Happy Hours Brotherhood to something else. Fred writes, personally, I see no reason to change the name. When it was named originally, it seemed the most suitable name. Changing the name would serve no useful purpose. The name is sacred to the old timers, as has always been associated with you and the Dime Novel Roundup. By changing the name the H. H. B. loses its identity. I think the name was well chosen, for no words can describe better those good old days when we were kids and could get away in some cozy corner and

revel in those fine stories—they were really "Happy Hours."

Clyde Wakefield writes, I am now a member of a great Brotherhood, that I should have joined years ago, for I have been a lover of the old story papers as well as the dime and nickel novels. My Grandfather was a great admirer of the story papers, and subscribed to 4 of them, the Sat Journal, Fireside Companion, New York Weekly and Saturday Night. I had a chance to read all of these in my youth, and certainly spent some wonderful hours with them. I remember a great many of the stories, but the Dick Talbot stories made a great impression in my mind. I can see the illustrations of the stories, Injun Dick, Velvet Hand, Gold Dan, Overland Kit, Kentucky the Sport, Rocky Mountain Rob in my mind as I write these lines to you. How I wish I had all these stories today, not for any desire of profit, but to be able to have them near to pick up and read over again as I did thirty years ago.

George H. Hess Jr. wants to know who has any of the "State Trooper's Adventure Series," published by McLoughlin Bros. Inc. Write what you have for sale.

The Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. XLIX, No. 3, January 1946 has a fine article, by J. C. Dykes, called "Dime Novel Texas, or The Sub-Literature of the Lone Star State." 14 pages. Send \$1.00 to The Texas State Historical Association, Austin 12, Tex. A fine article, on Beadles Yellowbacks, as well as other fine Ranger stories.

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